

1 NATIONAL GAMBLING IMPACT STUDY COMMISSION

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3 FIRST ON-SITE MEETING

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5 FOURTH REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

6 + + + + +

7 Wednesday, January 21, 1998

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10 The meeting was held in the Atlantic City
11 Convention Center, 2001 Kirkman Boulevard, Atlantic
12 City, New Jersey, at 9:00 a.m., Kay C. James,
13 Chairman, presiding.

14 COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

15 KAY C. JAMES, Chairman

16 WILLIAM A. BIBLE

17 JAMES C. DOBSON

18 J. TERRENCE LANNI

19 RICHARD C. LEONE

20 LEO T. MCCARTHY

21 PAUL H. MOORE

22 JOHN W. WILHELM

1 PANELISTS PRESENT:

2 KENNETH LE FEVRE

3 FRANK LOBIONDO

4 ROSALIND NORRELL-NANCE

5 ROBERT TORRICELLI

6 PETER VERNIERO

7 JAMES WHELAN

8 ALSO PRESENT:

9 CHARLES BAKALY

10 TIM BIDWILL

11 NANCY MOHR KENNEDY

12 AMY RICKETTS

13 MARTHA CLEMENT ROBERTS

14 DOUG SEAY

15 GEORGE J. TERWILLIGER, III

16 DR. TIM KELLY

17 STEVE REED

18 RON RENO

19 ERIC ALTMAN

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (9:14 a.m.)

3 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Good morning.

4 PARTICIPANTS: Good morning.

5 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Welcome to the fourth
6 meeting of the National Gambling Impact Study
7 Commission and, indeed, our first site visit.

8 I want to express my appreciation to the
9 State of New Jersey and to the City of Atlantic City
10 for the very warm welcome and assistance providing and
11 setting up this visit.

12 Those who represent this community, from
13 the Mayor and City Council President to the Casino
14 Control Commission, to local union representatives,
15 have worked very hard to insure that we would learn as
16 much as possible about the story this city has to tell
17 in a very short time.

18 For the benefit of those who are with us
19 for the first time, I want to take just a moment to
20 discuss the mission of this federal commission.

21 Congress established the National Gambling
22 Impact Study Commission to conduct a comprehensive and

1 factual study of the social and economic impacts of
2 legalized gambling on states, tribes, communities, and
3 individuals. The members of this Commission were
4 appointed by the President, the Speaker of the House,
5 and Senate Majority Leader, and are representative of
6 a number of very important and divergent perspectives.

7 At our last meeting in Washington, the
8 Commission established an ambitious research agenda
9 that focused on analyzing existing research on the
10 impact of gambling, fostering new research into this
11 area, and surveying those involved in the industry
12 both as proponents and as opponents.

13 Also included was the Commission's desire
14 to examine the issue of the problem of pathological
15 gambling.

16 The National Research Council has already
17 begun to analyze the scientific and other literature
18 related to gambling, and additional research will
19 shortly be underway.

20 We have a very short time frame in which
21 to complete this study and report back to the
22 President, Congress, state and tribal governments.

1 Therefore, site visits, such as this first visit to
2 Atlantic City, are critical to insure that this is not
3 simply a federal effort based in Washington, but
4 rather a serious examination of a serious matter that
5 includes meeting those individuals who are most
6 affected by legalized gambling.

7 Atlantic City is not only essential to
8 that understanding, but it represents a unique
9 opportunity to study the effects of legalized gambling
10 over the past 20 years. There's a story to tell here
11 in Atlantic City, and like any other story, I'm
12 certain that is one that has both good and perhaps
13 even some bad ones, but we're not here to judge or
14 criticize the past 20 years, nor are we here to
15 celebrate those times. Instead, we're here to learn
16 first hand about the impact of legalized gambling upon
17 this community and surrounding areas.

18 We're not here to tell you what gambling
19 means to this community. Rather, we're hear today to
20 listen to those who live here in this community and
21 allow them to tell their story.

22 Our reception thus far has been very warm,

1 very cordial, and indeed, very informative. As I
2 said, many representatives of the community have been
3 extraordinarily helpful in suggesting expert
4 witnesses, site visits, and assisting in logistical
5 arrangements.

6 Yesterday when I drove here from
7 Philadelphia, I was pleased to see the Convention
8 Center welcome signs at the toll booths and recognized
9 the importance that the casinos have had even to the
10 toll booth operator, who warmly welcomed us to this
11 city.

12 I was fortunate to have the opportunity to
13 visit some of the individuals and businesses affected
14 by gambling. At the Atlantic City Medical Center we
15 viewed what has become a first rate, community-based
16 health system, from a trauma center with some of the
17 finest staff in this part of the state, and also a
18 neonatal unit proudly boasting of its success, to high
19 technology radiology equipment unseen in most primary
20 care facilities anywhere.

21 While much of the credit here is due to
22 the quality staff of the medical center, a great deal

1 was accomplished because of the partnership the
2 hospital has with the casinos through the
3 Redevelopment Authority.

4 More importantly, I had the opportunity to
5 talk to members of this community most affected by
6 gambling, those who work in and around the casinos, those who -- we will spend
7 a lot of time this week hearing from gambling
8 experts and public officials, it is these individuals
9 who understand what legalized gambling truly means to
10 them and to their community.

11 These are the lives affected by our study,
12 and their stories are as critical to our process as
13 any others.

14 I want to thank Bob McDevitt,
15 the President of Union Local 54, for giving me the
16 opportunity to speak to some of these individuals.
17 Many represent great stories of personal initiative,
18 satisfaction, strong families, and hard work.

19 To them we pledge our commitment to listen
20 and to work toward a study that includes their
21 perspective.

22 Lastly, I want to recognize a group that

1 will probably not be recognized today: the millions
2 of men and women who come to Atlantic City each year
3 as tourists and casino patrons. Some come here and
4 experience the effects of legalized gambling only
5 under the lights of the casino floor, but some come
6 here and experience the impact of legalized gambling
7 elsewhere, sometimes in small, unimportant ways, and
8 sometimes in important ways like visits to that
9 emergency room.

10 While the vast majority come here and
11 leave as expected, some leave here coping with the
12 unanticipated consequences of problem gambling. We
13 will hear much about this tomorrow, but to those
14 individuals, as well, we also pledge our commitment to
15 listen and to work toward a study that recognizes the
16 problems they face.

17 While we certainly understand politics,
18 that's not why we're here today. I would encourage
19 those who are quick to judge the Commission and its
20 motives to do as we do and spend our time together
21 listening and learning.

22 I want to, again, thank you for your

1 hospitality, and we look forward to our time here in
2 Atlantic City. It's been wonderful thus far, and I'm
3 sure it will continue to be so.

4 We'll move now to our first panel, and,
5 ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming our
6 inviting panelist, Senator Robert Torricelli and
7 Senator Frank LoBiondo -- Congressman. I've just
8 given you a wonderful promotion. Congressman Frank
9 LoBiondo.

10 The Senior Senator from New Jersey,
11 Senator Frank Lautenberg, is unable to be with us
12 today, but has sent his remarks to the Commission on
13 videotape. We'll view that tape at the conclusion of
14 the remarks of the panel members who are here and
15 present today.

16 Our first speaker in the Honorable Robert
17 Torricelli, who represented the Ninth District of New
18 Jersey from 1983 until his election to the United
19 States Senate in 1996. Please join me in giving him
20 a very warm welcome.

21 (Applause.)

22 SENATOR TORRICELLI: Members of the